DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 199 218 SP 017 626

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TITLE A Small District Staff Development Model.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Advisory Committees; Financial Support; Individual Development; Inservice Teacher Education; Needs Assessment; Postsecondary Education; Program Development; Released Time; *School Community Relationship; *School Districts; Sequential Approach; *Staff Development; Teacher Centers
IDENTIFIERS *Small School Districts

ABSTRACT

A model was designed for staff development in a small school district comprised of 1300 students, 86 teachers, five administrators, and one elementary, one middle, and one high school. The central unit of the model is the Inservice Continuing Education Committee (ICEC). Membership in the ICEC includes representatives from the school, the school district administration, and the school board. All staff members have a direct line of communication to the ICEC. An assessment of inservice needs was conducted by meetings of small groups representing all participants in the educational community. Staff improvement programs were established in the following areas: (1) individual professional growth, including released time and financial aid for personal projects; (2) a teacher center for curriculum development with program emphasis on sequential K-12 curriculum; (3) cooperative efforts to standardize disciplinary procedures; and (4) community communication and cooperation. (JD)

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A SMALL DISTRICT STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODEL

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Lois Kitto has been chairperson for the Little Chute Inservice Continuing Education Committee from 1977 to 1981. She has also been coordinator of the Little Chute Teacher Center from 1978 to 1981. The Little Chute Staff Development Program was the 1980 recipient of the Wisconsin Association of Teacher Educators award for the most outstanding professional development program in Wisconsin.

A SMALL DISTRICT STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Staff development at the district and personal level has been an intrinsic part of the educational program in the Little Chute, Wisconsin School District for the past five years. Through much effort involving the entire community, the small district has developed an outstanding professional growth program that allows staff members ownership in their training programs. Besides an improved staff development program, evaluations have shown marked increases in positive staff attitudes and participation in professional growth activities, both at the district and individual level. Little Chute has been successful in designing and supporting a staff development program that suits the needs of its staff and community. The development of this program can serve as a model for other small districts in their search to improve professional growth programs for their staff and community.

BACKGROUND

The 6000 residents of Little Chute, Wisconsin support a K-12 public school system of approximately 1300 students, 86 teachers, 5 administrators and three buildings, one elementary, one middle and one high school.

In 1975, a task force was established consisting of administrators teachers and community members with the assignment of devising a staff development program that would satisfy the requirements set down by the district master contract, that of meeting district and individual needs for professional growth. The task force ran into problems in defining inservice and staff development and looked for outside help for direction. The

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Inservice Division was called upon to help clarify and set a direction for the task force. Inservice Division personnel met with the committee on serveral occasions to assist the group in formulating steps to take in order to develop a workable inservice program for the staff.

ESTABLISHING AN INSERVICE MODEL

With the assistance of the Department of Public Instruction Inservice Division, a model for the district inservice program was established. The ultimate objective for the inservice program was determined to be the improvement of the educational system of the community. In order to achieve this objective, the model recognized that certain problems needed to be solved which included the following:

1) programs needed to be developed to meet individual and district needs.

2) adequate time was needed for staff development.

3) a communication system needed to be formulated.

4) adequate funding had to be provided for.

5) effective evaluation of programs needed to be established.

6) opportunities for ample teacher and student in-put for program planning was needed.

The task force then described what they determined as desirable characteristics of inservice for their setting. The characteristics stated that Little Chute inservice programs should:

1) be cooperatively planned according to agreed upon priorities by all intended participants and include a clear statement of purpose.

2) vary in content and be relevant to the participants, providing for both immediate and long-range goals.

3) be supported by the board with sufficient time and money granted for planning, implementation, evaluation and follow-up of programs.

4) include provision for the analysis of specific building programs as well as intra-district needs.

To meet these needs the Inservice Continuing Education Committee (ICEC) was established in the spring of 1975. The committee continues to be the backbone of the entire staff development program for the district.

The ICEC is made up of ten members. In order that open communication in the development of inservice programs can be adequately provided for, the membership includes representatives from a variety of district and community areas. An open communication line to the district support system is provided by having the district administrator and a school board member represented on the ICEC. One building administrator is represented on the committee as well as four teachers, one from each building and one at large. The rest of the committee is made up of one exceptional education needs teacher, one student services staff member, and a program/project coordinator.

All staff members and the school board have a direct line of communication to the committee. As staff development decisions are made, there is comfort in realizing that all facets of the school system personnel are represented.

During the past several years, the Inservice Continuing Education Committee has been effective in using the developed model for inservice in improving professional development programs at the district and individual level. It has provided for an atmosphere conducive to professional growth and development, opened communications within the district, identified district and individual inservice needs, and devised methods for planning, implementing and evaluating programs.

DISTRICT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

After establishing an acceptable model for staff development and a representative committee, the ICEC, the district then saw a need for identifying and prioritizing inservice needs. Again with the assistance of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Inservice Division, a full day was set aside in April of 1976 to carry out an inservice needs assessment. The 120 participants included all Little Chute district teachers, administrators, and samplings of school board members, students and community members. Through the use of trained facilitators, inservice needs were identified using a small group interaction and consensus process. The process began by dividing the participants into mixed groups of 20. Each group was given an overview of the process and objectives of the session by the trained facilitator. Needs were to be cooperatively identified during the process.

To begin the process, each individual recorded what he/she felt were the top three district inservice needs. The participants then divided into groups of three or four to clarify, consolidate, and record individually identified needs. The small groups combined their lists with the entire group of 20 to form a master list that reflected a clear consice representation of the small groups identified inservice needs. With the aid of the facilitator, the 20 participants came to a consensus, incorporating all similar items without destroying any individual ideas. The groups final task was to rank order the master list. The top three selections were combined from all 120 participants. Culminating the days activities, the 120 participants rank ordered the final list of inservice needs. Three major inservice needs were identified. They

were the improvement of provisions for student growth based on the individual needs of all learners emphasizing the following:

1) total community communications.

2) coordinated and sequential K-12 curriculum.

3) standardized disciplinary procedure including attitudes and values.

Using the consensus process allowed every participant to communicate their individual feelings about inservice needs. The process gave each member ownership in the final established inservice needs. The results of this day have been used as the basis for improving staff development in Little Chute for the past four years.

Little Chute, Wisconsin was one of the first districts to carry out a formal needs assessment process as developed by the state Department of Public Instruction Inservice Division, and has since provided facilitators who have assisted in needs assessments in other Wisconsin school districts. The process has also been used by Little Chute as a communication model for other occasions other than inservice.

PERSONAL INSERVICE PROGRAM

The ICEC was charged with the task of devising a plan to meet individual professional growth needs for district employees. Each staff member has such varied needs, the process must allow each person to grow at their own level and rate. To do this a plan needed to include adequate personal goal setting procedures, methods for evaluation, and provisions for time and cost supports.

The district personal inservice program that evolved during the past four

years supports staff members in their efforts to examine their professional philosophies, update their professional knowledge, and refine their professional skills, all in accordance with the staff members' own definitions of their professional improvement needs.

Each year the district has provided each staff member with $100 and 2½ school days to help supplement time and costs involved in pursuing individual professional growth plans. During the 1981 school year, the ICEC has proposed a $50 increase per staff member.

Staff members may use district personal inservice funds and allocated time in the following ways:

1) reimbursement for purchase of professional books, magazines. or memberships related to the person's job description.

2) attendance at seminars, conferences, and meetings related to a person's job description.

3) inservice workshops held within the district. Groups of staff members may pool their personal inservice funds to help alleviate the cost of arranging for resource persons or personal inservice programs set up in the district.

4) visitations within the district.

Each year staff members complete an individual personal inservice plan. The plan includes proposed personal professional development objectives and activities to be accomplished during the year. The information may be updated and changed throughout the year if the person so desires.

To use the district personal inservice time or funds provided, a staff member must apply for inservice leave or reimbursement in advance. The district administrator, who is a member of the ICEC, approves or disapproves requests based on criteria established by the ICEC. When an individual completes an

activity, he/she submits a written evaluation describing how participation in the activity has helped in meeting individual goals applicable to his/her setting. At that time reimbursement is given to the individual.

Besides individual evaluations, the ICEC compiles a yearly report of personal inservice in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the total program. The ICEC has found that the staff uses an average of 60-70% of the allotted funds and 1.33 school days for personal inservice activities. On the other hand, it was found that much more than the average was spent in personal time and funding by the staff in support of their own professional growth activities.

The personal inservice program in Little Chute treats individuals as professionals, giving them final say in establishing their personal objectives and goals for a year. The program is well accepted by the district and motivates staff to be involved in continued professional growth.

The following chart shows evaluation results gathered from the entire staff personifying attitudes and effectiveness of the personal inservice program. Each statement was rated on a scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest.

Averaged Results Districtwide

January/1980	August/1979	
4.29	3.83	Your knowledge of personal inservice programs.
3.88	3.48	Your utilization of personal inservice opportunities.
4.19	3.55	Effectiveness of personal inservice program.

DISTRICT INSERVICE PROGRAMS

The Little Chute School District is provided with several days each year for staff development activities, including two preservice, one post-service, two inservice, and two WEA Convention days. The ICEC plans programs for these days based on needs assessments involving the entire staff. The past several years programs have been geared to improved K-12 curriculum, communications improvement, and humanizing the schools for improved discipline.

The ICEC found that many staff members are willing and excellent resources for staff development activities. For one staff development day each January, the ICEC invites colleagues to share their expertise in an educational area of their choice. Staff members who are interested in giving presentations to peers submit proposals to the ICEC describing the session topic including objectives, resources needed, and time/cost factors. All the submitted topics are compiled and given final approval by the ICEC. The entire staff is then asked to rank order the topics based on what is relevant to their needs and job description. From this information, a one day program is scheduled including as many a 16 selections for the staff to choose from.

The staff shows much enthusiasm for the peer staff development day. Besides offering many choices for a relatively low cost to the district, it gives many staff members an opportunity to organize and present a session to peers, that in itself being a professional growth experience. This district activity also allows everyone the opportunity to be a part of the organization and planning of staff development programs.

TEACHER CENTER FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The Inservice Continuing Education Committee is charged with the responsibility of helping the district develop a coordinated K-12 curriculum. To meet the need for improved curriculum, subject area committees representing each grade level were established and charged with the responsibility of developing a sequential skills program for their particular subject area. In the spring of 1978, resource people were brought into the district to work with the staff in developing skills for curriculum writing. The need for an efficient curriculum development and staff support system arose as committees recognized the need for more direction in accomplishing the task they set out to do. In the fall of 1979, the district received a Title IV, Part C grant for the development of a teacher center that provided teachers with appropriate opportunities and resources to revise existing curricula. The ICEC became the governing board for the $13,000 one year project.

This project has helped the district develop a process to give teachers appropriate opportunities, resources, and support in revising, developing and implementing K-12 curriculum. The district has no full-time curriculum coordinator on staff. Instead o hiring such an expert, the Little Chute Teacher Center distributes funds to approximately 20 capable and interested teachers who are selected as subject area curriculum facilitators on a yearly basis. The teachers are salaried at the same rate as staff for extra-curricular activities.

The Little Chute Teacher Center Program begins with interested subject area curriculum committees submitting proposals to the ICEC for revising or implementing existing curricula, creating or articulating curricula across

grade levels, or evaluating curriculum progress. Each proposal contains a summary of subject area K-12 curriculum progress, goals for the coming year, strategies to be followed to meet expected goals, list of required resources, a detailed time line, and recommendations for approximately three teachers who will participate as curriculum facilitators for the project.

The ICEC then selects curriculum proposals to be supported through the Little Chute Teacher Center Program. Projects are selected for implementation during the school year and/or the first few weeks of summer vacation. When projects are completed, they are evaluated by the appropriate subject area curriculum group, administrators, and the ICEC. Suggestions are then made for continued curriculum work.

A member of the ICEC is selected to coordinate the Little Chute Teacher Center. The coordinator is responsible for communicating teacher center functions and activities to all staff, implementing the selected curriculum projects, gathering and interpreting evaluation data on the teacher center, and reporting progress to the ICEC and school board. The coordinator must make a strong effort to keep communications open between teachers, administrators, and the school board. Only with such cooperation can the K-12 curriculum be a total district product that is acceptable to all.

The Little Chute Teacher Center illustrates the cooperation and open communication established between the members of the staff and school board. The program represents a positive effort to meet the established inservice need of coordinated curriculum planning and development while taking into account the needs of the students of Little Chute.

After having observed the performance of the Little Chute Teacher Center in its first year of operation, many curriculum committees and teachers have requested to participate in the program. A real sense of interest and motivation for involvement by teachers in K-12 curriculum improvement is being noticed. Many curriculum areas have developed usable curriculum since the establishment of the Little Chute Teacher Center. Because the teachers have been an intrinsic part of the curriculum development process, they are anxious and willing to apply it in their setting. A much more coordinated approach to curriculum is being noticed with K-12 teachers cooperating together in the development of their curriculum. Because the project has been so successful, the district is continuing support of the Little Chute Teacher Center.

SUMMARY

As the need for continued professional growth for teachers becomes more apparent, school districts of all sizes need to take a look at what they are doing to enhance the development of their staff. Small school districts, as Little Chute, Wisconsin has shown, have the resources available for developing quality district and individual professional growth programs. The professional development program in Little Chute has been a joint venture between teachers, administrators, school board, and community. The cooperation and open communication have led to a most successful attempt at meeting district and individual needs for professional growth.